

PRAYER

Imam Yusuf Saleem, Masjid Muhammad, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

With God's name, the merciful benefactor, the merciful redeemer. We seek Your guidance, Your mercy, and Your forgiveness that this body of servants to God and this country will be blessed with hindsight, insight, and foresight as only You can provide. Supply this elected assembly, entrusted by our Nation's citizens, to ultimately trust the creator of us all. As defined by humans, these are delicate times, but still we know it is Your times. So let truth, excellence, justice, and service lead the intellects and souls of our House of Representatives.

Yes, God bless America. Yes, God has blessed America. Yes, God is still blessing America, a land of diversity in every imaginable way. For in the Holy Quran, a book of guidance to humanity, it states, "God has honored all of the children of Adam." And in America's Declaration of Independence, "all men are created equal."

So, with resources, material, spiritual, and mental, we thank God. We thank You, God, for engineering the tradition of this land to witness that life and liberty must be secured by submitting our wills to Your plan. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. DRAKE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING IMAM YUSUF SALEEM

(Mr. ELLISON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce to the Members of this body Imam Yusuf Saleem, a devoted servant of the Muslim faith and a recognized leader of the Muslim community. Imam Saleem is a graduate of Howard University, where he earned both his bachelor's of arts degree as well as his master's degree in education. He is a devoted educator who has held the rank of professor, principal, and teacher.

In the wake of the brutal terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Imam Saleem, along with other prominent

leaders of the Muslim community, met with President George Bush to condemn the attacks and to establish a unified front against terrorism. As spokesman for this historic meeting, Imam Saleem's remarks, along with those of President Bush, helped to clarify for the American people the peaceful nature of the religion of Islam.

Imam Saleem's tireless work has not gone unnoticed. In August 2002, the District of Columbia awarded Imam Saleem the first mayoral clergy award. In 2002, he was named Muslim man of the year by members of the Muslim community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming to the floor a true citizen-servant who is committed to his faith, his family, and the United States of America.

SCHIP

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, last week President Bush threatened to veto a bipartisan agreement that will provide health insurance to 10 million of America's children.

Before acting on this threat, the President should talk to our Nation's Governors, 43 of whom support a robust reauthorization of children's health insurance, known as SCHIP, set to expire this Sunday night. Governors such as Republican John Huntsman of Utah, Republican Tim Pawlenty of Wisconsin, Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger of California, and Republican Jodi Rell of my State of Connecticut have all endorsed protecting this program, which the bipartisan agreement will accomplish.

Make no mistake about it; the President's plan will disqualify millions of American children from SCHIP coverage in the future. We already know, in Connecticut, 5,000 children will be kicked off the existing SCHIP program if his plan goes through.

Mr. Speaker, Republican and Democratic Governors together recognize the importance of a strong SCHIP program. It is time for him to listen to these Governors and back off his veto threat.

APPRECIATION FOR TROOPS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this last weekend I was grateful to visit our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I saw firsthand the growing success in Baghdad during a visit with Major General Joseph Fil, commander of forces in Baghdad, to a neighborhood joint security site. We saw shops open, normal traffic, and civilians unafraid. This evidence of success was repeated

in a visit to Ramadi, where enthusiastic American and Iraqi troops have deposited the al Qaeda terrorists.

In Kabul, I was briefed on training of Afghan police by the 218th Brigade of the South Carolina Army National Guard led by General Bob Livingston. As a 28-year veteran of the 218th, I know the competence and resolve of our troops. Additionally, in Jalalabad, American and Afghani provincial reconstruction teams are promoting security, governance, and economic development.

With eight visits to Iraq and four to Afghanistan, I am more convinced than ever that to protect the American families we must stop the terrorists overseas. Our dedicated troops deserve our support of this vital mission.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

SCHIP

(Mr. SESTAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, entering my 31st year in the military, my single daughter, 4-year-old Alex, was struck with a malignant brain tumor. After two brain operations and given 3 to 9 months to live, we moved into a cancer ward and began a journey that has her here today and has me in the House.

The incident that brought me here was, her roommate that day as she began her chemotherapy was a young 2½-year-old boy from Washington, DC. He was diagnosed that morning with acute leukemia, and for 6 hours we could not help but overhear as social workers came and went to see if that 2½-year-old boy could stay because his parents did not have health insurance.

I have been in combat. I have seen the worst of human nature. I have also seen the best of human nature. This SCHIP bill would cover 10 million uninsured Americans, that 2½-year-old boy, so that social worker does not determine whether some child is taken care of, is the best of our nature. I ask everyone to support the SCHIP bill.

THE BATTLE AGAINST THE BRIDGE TO NOWHERE

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, we have won the battle against the Bridge to Nowhere.

This \$320 million federally subsidized structure would have been as long as the Golden Gate Bridge, standing 80 feet higher than the Brooklyn Bridge. It would have connected the mainland to an island, population 50, with no roads or stores.

Last year, the House adopted the Kirk amendment, blocking all funding for the Bridge to Nowhere. It was a